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Title: Need to release funds under the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme to Tamil Nadu.

DR. P. VENUGOPAL (TIRUVALLUR): Tamil Nadu is implementing the Centrally sponsored Scheme of Post Matric Scholarship for students belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes pursuing higher studies in recognized institutions. Under this scheme, 100 per cent Central Assistance is provided to all States/UTs beyond the committed liability. In the three financial years, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16, the Government of Tamil Nadu had submitted claims totaling Rs. 2551.38 crore for both the categories. As against this claim, only Rs. 1314.24 crores were released by the Union Government leaving a balance of Rs. 1167.69 crores. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had admitted Tamil Nadu's claim in total. However, funds have not been released so far reportedly due to insufficient budgetary allocations. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has been allocating huge funds for the welfare of SC/ST students. Tamil Nadu Government pays special attention to SC/ST students who aspire to take up research studies abroad in the field of Engineering, Technology and other Science disciplines which are not available in India. Therefore, timely release of scholarships is very essential to keep the students, most of whom are from very poor families, adequately motivated to pursue their studies. Given the importance and sensitivity of this scheme, I appeal to the Government to provide adequate funds to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to enable it to release the entire pending central share of Rs. 1167.69 crores due to Tamil Nadu under the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.